NO 2

A

Dissertation

on

The Causes, Symptoms and Treatment

of

Amenorrhoea

Submitted as

An Inaugural Thesis

For

The Degree of Doctor of Medicine

By Elias Wills Napier

of

Nashville Tennessee

1812

An
Inaugural Dissertation
for
the Degree
of
Doctor of Medicine
Submitted
to the Examination
of
John Anderson M.D. Regent
the
Trustees and Medical Professors
of the
University of Pennsylvania

An

No 2

Inaugural Dissertation

For

The Degree

of

Doctor of Medicine

Submitted

To the Examination

of

John Andrews L.L. Provost

The

Trustees and Medical Professors

of The

University of Pennsylvania

In

treat briefly

men and ot

the female

two they ha

The menstr

constitutions

go by its co

that we sho

causes, symp

Amenor

absence of the

vided into

understood

which exists

their usual

An Essay &c.

In the following pages it is proposed to treat briefly of the Disease called by Doctor Cullen and others Amenorrhoea. To this Disease the female sex are continually subject after they have arrived to that age at which the menstrual discharge is instituted; and their constitutions frequently suffer considerable ravages by its continuance. It is then highly necessary that we should be completely acquainted with its causes, symptoms and treatment

Amenorrhoea which strictly signifies an absence of the menstrual discharge, has been divided into two kinds— Retention by which is understood that unnatural state of the system which exists when the menses do not appear at their usual or proper period of life. and Suppression

sion which
eturn by a
that age a
distinction
use in lea

It is n
riod Rete
the age a
appear, v
countries, a
In our c
period of
teenth yea
sooner an
without the
of Disease.
hen we n
from date
and the li

=sion which is the stoppage of their periodical return by any other cause than conception, before that age at which they naturally disappear. This distinction however does not seem to be of much use in leading us to the cure.

It is not possible for us to say at what period Retention of the menses may occur. as the age at which they naturally should appear, varies in different climates, and countries, and in different constitutions. In our climate however the most frequent period of their occurrence, is about the fourteenth year. Sometimes they occur much sooner and at other times much later without their absence producing any symptoms of Disease. Neither is it easy for us to say when we may suspect suppression, merely from dates; as the period of their recurrence and the time of their final cessation varies considerably

considerably in
=erally occur
thirty days, an
days untill th
=ly about the fo
however are fo
and from them
stances we can
labours under

The mos

1 The unusu
the sedative
unsuccess love,

2 Severe cat
most atmosph
in ball rooms

3 The repeat

4 Any injur
whatever. To th

considerably in different individuals. They most generally occur periodically every twenty eight or thirty days, and continue to flow for two or three days untill their final cessation which is generally about the forty eighth or fiftieth year. These estimates however are far from being uniformly correct; and from them therefore without other circumstances we can not possibly say that a patient labours under suppression.

The most usual causes are

1 The unusual operation of any one or more of the sedative passions and emotions as grief, fear, unsuccess love, great anxiety &c. &c.

2 Severe catarrhs, and exposure to a cold and moist atmosphere directly after being confined in ball rooms and other crouded assemblies.

3 The repeated and too liberal use of acids.

4 any injuries to the general health from any cause whatever. To those I might add a great many others

and particul

Now whethe

tem will pr

Retention

and observa

decide, but

The dis

period of lif

begins to app

tention; and

be so directed

For in mos

being the caus

diney to agg

more violent

The follo

the age of men

confirmation

A sluggo

and particularly the fashionable dresses of the day. Now whether or not those causes acting on the system will produce at different times both the Retention and suppression, my experience and observation are not such as to enable me to decide, but I think it most likely that they do.

The diseases of females occuring about that period of life when the menstrual ~~flux~~ discharge begins to appear, should command our earliest attention; and our first ~~[illegible]~~ inquiry should be so directed as to ascertain the state of the Uterus. For in most cases we may suspect Retention as being the cause or in some degree having a tendency to aggravate and make the complaint more violent in its nature.

The following symptoms (if appearing about the age of menstruation) will very much add to the confirmation of our suspicions on this point.

A sluggishness and frequent sense of lassitude

and

and debility
colour, becom
the whole b
and perhaps
with Adem
is hurried
the heart is
-ach somati
the back,
of Dyspepsia
-natural ap
symptom, w
It sometimes
-ing discha
most violent
the appetite
-vices absorb
his followers
in supporti
medicatrix n
my power to
perine: as i
my opinion o

and debility occur, at the same time the face loses its vivid colour, becomes pale and sometimes of a yellowish hue; the whole body becomes pale and flaccid, and the feet and perhaps a great part of the body becomes effected with Adematous swellings; the breathing becomes is hurried by any quick or laborious exercise; and the heart is liable to palpitation and syncope; a head-ach sometimes occurs, but more certainly pains in the back, loins and haunches; various symptoms of Dyspepsia appear sometimes attended with preter-natural appetite. This last is a very extraordinary symptom, which has not been hitherto explained. It sometimes accompanies every cessation of the Ure-rine discharge, but frequently appears in the most violent degree in pregnancy. In young women the appetite for lime, rubbish, charcoal and various ~~various~~ absorbents is the most prevalent. Stahl & his followers made great use of this circumstance in supporting their favourite opinion of the vis medicatrix natura. I would be happy if it were in my power to treat of this Disease from my own ex-perience: as it is not I will merely venture to express my opinion of it; and then speak of such remedies as

may

may be, or seem

Retention

and decreased

appears with

skin and other

to bleed a little

and cooling

action is subdu

In Reten

ticularly in the

the country air

gence in venere

have all been

ing a more copi

I am next to

entering upon

ruption of the

ken place is

hrefsion, for the

ance is not alway

lar course, and

pen soon after the

may be, or seem best calculated for the treatment of it.

Retention depends upon two causes (viz) increased and decreased action. In increased action which appears with quick and tense pulse, dry and hot skin and other symptoms of fever, it would be proper to bleed a little at a time and give cathartics of a mild and cooling nature untill the force of the arterial action is subdued or moderated.

In Retention depending upon weak action particularly in the Uterine vessels, moderate exercise in the country air walking daneing and moderate indulgence in venery (when circumstances do not forbid it) have all been recommended. These all act by occasioning a more copious determination of blood to the Uterus.

I am next to consider the cure of suppression. In entering upon this I must observe that every interruption of the menstrual discharge after it has taken place is not to be considered as a case of suppression, for the catemenia upon its first appearance is not always immediately established in its regular course, and therefore if an interruption should happen soon after the first appearance; or even with in

the

the course of th
it may be com
when the Disease
mon to that s
=rious sympto
often arising f
off by the Uter
to other parts,
=dice hemor
Hence he
stomach, and
=quence of Supp
are commonly
produced by th
face, nausea,
belly, quick a
of sleep and D
The remedi
will treat of a f
most succesful
Of Worm
the Uterus Doc
ably, and her

the course of the first or perhaps the second year it may be considered as a case of Retention; especially when the Disease appears with the symptoms most common to that state. Suppression is attended with various symptoms in different parts of the body, very often arising from the blood which should have passed off by the Uterus, being determined more copiously to other parts, and often with such force as to produce hemorrhage in them.

Hence hemorrhages from the nose, lungs, stomach, and other parts have appeared in consequence of suppressed menstruation. Besides these there are commonly Hysteric, and Dyspeptic symptoms produced by the same cause; as also flushing of the face, nausea, vomiting, colic pains, with a bound belly, quick and tense pulse, cardialgia thirst want of sleep and Dyspnea.

The remedies used in this disease are numerous, I will treat of a few of them which have been reputed most successful.

Of Warm bathing applied to the region of the Uterus Doctor Cullen seems to think very favourably, and has ranked it as foremost in his list of

remedy

But should no
bathing alone,
iliary to purgi

Doctor Al
Hellebore in
in doses of two
tin of other re
given as recom
to four tea spoo
least relief

Compres
spoken of as
On the recom
Dr Home m
quets, hafed ro
sufficient, i
to the lower e
a turgescence
of treatment
of many. Bu
in proportion
-ing and curin

Of six cases
-fect of this pr
success which

But I should not think it safe to risk the cure to warm bathing alone, tho' it may be a very important auxiliary to purging blood letting &c. &c.

Doctor Mead recommended the tincture of black Hellebore in very favourable terms. He gave it in doses of two tea-spoons-full a day. In the practice of other respectable medical men, it has been given as recommended by Mead and even enlarged to four tea spoons full a day without affording the least relief

Compressing the crural artery has been spoken of as a valuable remedy in amenorrhoea. On the recommendation of Doctor Hamilton Dr. Home made six or eight trials with tourniquets passed round the thighs making compression sufficient, in part; to impede the passage of blood to the lower extremities, and in that way to cause a turgescence of the vessels of the uterus. This mode of treatment no doubt accords with the theory of many. But a remedy should always be esteemed in proportion to its efficacy in preventing, relieving and curing diseases, when tested by experience

Of six cases in which Doctor Home tried the effect of this practice one only was attended with success which is a very small proportion, certainly not

sufficient

to support the c
of compression
the strongest
the Uterus w
-ilar to those
catamenia. S
that many P
lief that it w
the case. Th
plethora and
in all such c
-ful and shou
effects of vena
-ges are stro
cases arising
decreased arte
culiarly well
to in all such
-edies do not s

Rubia

very highly of
the menses a
has favoured

to support the character of any remedy. From the effects of compression as described by Doctor Home, it has the strongest appearance of loading the vessels of the Uterus with blood; as the symptoms are similar to those which indicate the approach of the catamenia. In deed this remedy was so plausible that many Physicians were sanguine in the belief that it would succeed, but this was not the case. The Uterus I suppose is often in too plethoric and inflammatory a state; consequently in all such cases this remedy will prove to be hurtful and should never be resorted to. The good effects of venaesection, pediluvium and purges are strong proofs of it. Tho in particular cases arising from inanition and debility with decreased arterial action, I should think it peculiarly well adapted and should be resorted to in all such cases where the more common remedies do not succeed.

Rubia Tinctorum Tournefort has spoken very highly of the efficacy of madder in provoking the menses at a very early period. Doctor Home has favoured us with a statement of fifteen or twenty cases

case which
to the extent
was preceded
represented th
most any o
that he has
menagogue in
that allowance
Patient which
Some it u
is too often
in medicine
in terms too

Sabina

powerful effe
procure abo
of those who
lent hemorrh
tri it is no
of a Physici
happy circum
stances were su
with this an
that are too

cases which he treated with madder in divided doses to the extent of four or six drachms a day, which was preceded by the exhibition of an emetic. Home represented this practice as being preferable to almost any other. But it appears quite probably that he has treated of its ~~[illegible]~~ efficacy as an emenagogue in terms too favourable, and not made that allowance for the influence of the emetic on the Patient which he ought to have done. With Dr Home it was a newly discovered remedy, and it is too often the case that we see recent discoveries in medicine as well as in all other science, spoken of in termes too exalted and extravagant.

Sabina or Savin. This is notorious for its powerful effects on the Uterus. It is often used to procure abortions and is said to endanger the life of those who use it for that purpose, by the violent hemorrhage which it provokes. In many countries it is not allowed to be sold unless by the order of a Physician. It would be a favourable and happy circumstance for the Citizens of the United States were such a rule rigourously adhered to with this and many other medicines of the Kind that are too often resorted to by persons who are ignorant

ness of medic
natural birth
ogue even wh
withstanding
used by mar
in cases of Am
of ℔s and in
or three time
it most prud
and increase
the patient

Electric

through the
others have be
of Amenorrhoe
city has in i
and the power
me to think
tain cases of
on great deb

Blood

of this
menses have
it when the p
forbid its use.

rant of medicine. It has been much used to promote natural birth, and is reputed a strong emmenagogue even when externally applied to the skin. Notwithstanding the power of this medicine it has been used by many authors with the happiest effect in cases of Amenorrhœa, beginning with the dose of ℥ss and increasing to ℥j of the powder two or three times a day; but I should suppose it most prudent to begin with smaller doses and increase gradually to the quantity that the patient will be able to take with safety.

Electricity By passing electrical shocks through the region of the Uterus, Dr Duncan & others have been very succesful in the treatment of Amenorrhœa. The well known power that electricity has in increasing and restoring sensibility and the power of motion to other parts, induces me to think very favourably of its use in certain cases of Amenorrhœa, such as depend upon great debility and prostration of strength.

Bloodletting. The admirable effects of this ~~Medicine~~ Remedy in suppression of the menses have been witnessed by all who have used it when the pulse and other symptoms did not forbid its use. I believe that ten in twelve cases

of

of amenor
et, in sma
tion is of pru
plication of
tion to the

The c
perfect Eff
tendering
to the Prop
advantage
lectures.

I will al
acknowledg
-ness mu
to expect

Am
mind I
leaving a
in Medi

of amenorrhœa will require the use of the lancet, in small but frequent quantities. This practice is of primary importance but a proper application of it will require our strictest attention to the pulse and others symptoms.

The conclusion of this short and imperfect Essay gives me an opportunity of tendering my grateful acknowledgements to the Professors of this Institution, for the advantages I have derived from their lectures. To Professors Coxe and ——— I will always feel a pleasure in offering acknowledgements for attention and politeness much greater than I had a right to expect.

Among the sensations arising in my mind I can not suppress my regret at leaving and biding my public Instructors in Medicine adieu

On